

RESPONDING TO THE RECEIPT OF ENVELOPES OR PACKAGES SUSPECTED TO CONTAIN ANTHRAX OR OTHER BIOLOGICAL AGENTS

Many facilities in communities around Maryland have received anthrax threat letters. Most were empty envelopes; some have had talcum powder in them. None have had anthrax. The letter usually reads something like "You have been exposed to anthrax," and most frequently have been seen in schools and family planning facilities. The purpose of these guidelines is to recommend procedures for handling such incidents.

DO NOT PANIC

1. Anthrax organisms can cause skin infection, gastrointestinal infection or pulmonary infection. To do so the organism must be rubbed into abraded skin, swallowed, or inhaled as a fine, aerosolized mist. It does not leap into one's body. All forms of disease are generally treatable with antibiotics.
2. For anthrax to be effective as a covert agent it must be aerosolized into particles between 0.4 and 2/10,000ths of an inch, smaller than a red blood cell. This is difficult to do, and requires a great deal of technical skill and special equipment. If these small particles are inhaled, life-threatening lung infection can occur, but prompt recognition and treatment are effective.
3. Anthrax cannot be aerosolized out of an envelope or package containing powder. The same facts and conditions are generally true for other bacteria likely to be considered as biological weapons.

UNOPENED LETTER OR LETTER THAT APPEARS EMPTY:

4. Place envelope in a plastic bag or glassine envelope.
5. Wash hands with SOAP and WATER.
6. NOTIFY your supervisor and DGS Police.

ENVELOPE WITH POWDER AND POWDER SPILLS OUT ONTO SURFACE:

7. DO NOT clean powder up. Keep others away.
8. WASH hands with soap and water.
9. NOTIFY your supervisor and the DGS Police
10. IF CLOTHING is heavily contaminated, don't brush vigorously. REMOVE it when possible and place in plastic bag.
11. SHOWER with SOAP and WATER as soon as possible at home. DO NOT use bleach or other disinfectant.
12. PUT on fresh clothing.
13. MAKE list of all people who had actual contact with the powder and give to local public health authorities. Instruct contacts to watch for fever or other symptoms over the next several days.

PACKAGE MARKED WITH THREATENING MESSAGE SUCH AS "ANTHRAX":

14. DO NOT OPEN.
15. LEAVE it and EVACUATE the room.
16. KEEP others from entering.
17. NOTIFY your supervisor and the DGS Police.

AEROSOLIZATION, SMALL EXPLOSION, OR LETTER STATING "ANTHRAX IN HEATING SYSTEM":

18. LEAVE room immediately.
19. SECURE entry.
20. SHUT down air handling system.
21. NOTIFY your supervisor and the DGS Police.
22. REMAIN on premises until responders arrive.
23. MAKE list of all people who were in the building at the time and give to local public health authorities. They may instruct them to watch for fever or other symptoms over the next several days.

FOR ALL SUSPICIOUS UNLABELED MAIL NOTIFY THE DGS POLICE. DO NOT OPEN.

**Contact Numbers: Baltimore - 410-767-4793
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